

A TRUE
NARRATIVE
OF THE
CAUSE and MANNER
OF THE
DISSOLUTION
Of the late
PARLIAMENT,

Upon the 12. of Decemb. 1653.

By a Member of the House, then present
at that Transaction.



Printed in the Year, 1653.

READER,



Yesterday morning, being the 12 instant, very many persons came an hour and more sooner to the House than was usual, which was the first apprehension that was taken of any thing to be done; but by that, something more than ordinary was conceived would be attempted: The Speaker taking the Chair, a Member made his address to him to this effect, *That he must disburthen himself of some things that had a long time lain upon his heart; That he was now to speak to the (Esse) or being, rather than the (bene esse, or) wellbeing of the Commonwealth, which was ready to sink under us, through the ill management of the power betruſted with us and that for his own part he must resign his power from whence he had it, fore seeing clearly that their waitings and expectations of ever coming on to things of publike good, were more and more disappointed; and so came to these particular instances:*

2 That we had not a spirit to do justice, which appeared in our Act for confirming the sale of Sir John Stowels estate, though he were relieved by the Court of Articles. And that however he was as wild as could be imagined

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(so was his expression) yet he knew not but that man was left to be as a tryal upon us whether we could do justice or not.

3 That we had a principle of destroying and pulling down amongst us, though nothing were set up in the stead; and this was especially manifested in our Vote for removing the Chancery, and total alteration of the Laws.

4 That though we called our selves a Parliament, yet we acted most unlike to it: and that appeared in our endeavors to destroy Propriety, in attempting to take off the power of Patrons to preserve Church-livings.

5 That we would destroy the Ministry it self, which appeared by our Vote upon Saturday last For these considerations they could not satisfie themselves to sit any longer, and so be guilty of bringing confusion and desolation upon the Nation. But if any would yet be so hardy as to continue there, he would say unto them in the words of the Prophet; Ephraim hath joyned himself to Idols. let him alone.

This was seconded by two others, who interwove their speeches with some bitter invectives, which was heard with patience (and shal not be here inserted.) After that, another member stood up, and declaring himself to speak with much disadvantage, in that he had not as the other, any premeditated thing to say; but told the Speaker he had in his hand an Expedient in reference to the things comprehended in the Vote on Saturday last, that he hoped would satisfie all; and that the Committee for regulating the Law had ready to be offered to the House Bills of very great concernment, to the good and ease of the people, and protested before God, Angels, and men, his dissatisfaction to the thing moved, as being destructive to the Commonwealth. Others standing up to second him, could not be suffered to speak: But some others pressing the former motion, saying wicshall, it was not now a time to debate. The Speaker being of their judgment (the whole businesse being before contrived) without putting it to the Question, or adjourning to any other place, left the Chair, and went hastily out of the House with them: some 30 and odd staid within, who mutually declaring that they had profest in the presence of the Lord, that they were called of God to that place; which was the principal motive that drew them thither; and that they apprehended their said Call was chiefly for promoting the interest of Jesus Christ. Beginning therefore to consider what to do, Col. Goff, and Lieu. col. White came in and entreated them earnestly to go out, pressing it often. It was as earnestly

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ly replied to them, that at their personal Request they could not; but desired them to withdraw, unless they had command to put them forth: which when they perceived, they commanded in some Musqueteers; upon which they withdrew: soon after, several were sent for to come to White-Hall, where an Instrument was drawn up for resigning the power to the General, which was subscribed by many, but refused by others. This the late Speaker, with a short preamble delivered to the General, who was ready, with his Officers, to receive it. Having thus far given a true state of the business, I shall explain and observe a little upon the particulars urged for this action. And first take notice that all the Interests, but the despised ones of Christ, are taken in.

I The Souldiery: And as to what was urged as disingenuity to them, in endeavouring to retrench some of the Officers pay; It was moved indeed in order to the abatement of the Tax, That in respect of their great estates, already gotten, and the little hazard & paines they were now at in this time of peace, and the sore and heavy burden *Nebe.* that was upon the people, that the chief Officers would for 15. 18 one year in this time of streight, serve the Commonwealth freely, as they had called the Parliament to do. And concerning the motion of casting out the Bill of Assessement, it was upon this ground, that it was an unequal and oppressive way of Levie, which yet, lest then the Affairs of the Commonwealth should suffer, was waved, hoping ere another Assessement should be laid, it might be done by a pound a'e, or some other more equal way of Assesse, instance being given of some Towns and Counties in the Commonwealth, paying 12 and 13 shillings in the pound; and others but two and three.

II. The Cavaliers Interest is taken up in that Case of Sr John Stowel, too long to be related; onely note, that he was put into the Act for sale by the former Parliament; who when they understood that the Court for Relief upon Articles, had taken Cognisance of his Cause, ordered that they should not proceed therein: So his Estate was sold before the sitting of this Parliament. The Purchasers by their Petition to the Parliament, pray'd a Confirmation of their Purchases, because the Court of Articles did go on to hear his business, and indeed judged he had the benefit of Articles: The Parliament therefore upon information from some of the principal Officers of the Army then in the House, and also some of the Members

Members of the former House, did upon mature consideration, pass an Act to confirm the sale; and if he were to be relieved, it might be time enough when he applyed for it, seeing the very Act upon which he was relieved, saith, that restitution should be made in *specie*, or in value: And it is observable, that the persons now using this staff to beat others, were principally active in the passing of that Act.

III. The Interest of the Lawyers was taken up, though the person that moved it did with more vehemency then any other, presse that there might be a Committee to consider of a new Body of the Law, using this Argument, *That the way to destroy the Brood, was to pull down the Nest.*

IV. The businesse of Presentations takes in the corrupt Gentry, and is a fair bait to persons of all sorts.

V. And lastly, which yet was principally in their aim, the National Clergy struck at in Saturdaies Vote. Now as for that Vote, it was the Result of six dayes Debate upon a Report from the *Committee for Tythes*, brought in to stifle the former Vote for taking away the power of Patrons to present. It was offered in that Report, as the best way for ejecting, ignorant, scandalous, and prophane Ministers, and encouraging the Godly, that Commissioners should be sent from hence into the six Circuits of the Nation, three in a Circuit, to joyn with four or six in each County, who should have power, two of those that were to be sent from hence being alwayes present to eject ignorant, scandalous, and prophane Ministers, and to place in their stead such as were found in the Faich, apt to teach, and not greedy of filthy lucre, and their maintenance to be that which was already established by Law: this met with opposition; and this Paper cannot insert the Arguments. It was apprehended by some, that this was a way to establish a National Parochial Ministry, consisting of those Popish names of Parsons, Vicars, and Curats; and also that oppressive (to say no more of it here) burden of Tythes; and it lookt rather like the making up of a breach in the Kingdom of Antichrist, then pulling it down, as it was hoped would have been the present work; and yet so as no one that the Lord hath anointed for the Work of the Ministry, should have the least discouragement. The Question being put for agreeing with the Report, it was carried in the Negative, from whence principally

pally arose this late action. Now for as much as I cannot be insensible that Satan, that old Dragon, wil never want aspersions to cast upon the Lords own people, and especially in the latter dayes, when he wil more rage because he hath but a short time; and if possible, as an Angel of light, cloath his temptations with a fine Web, as if all this had been necessitated to befall us (who are charged as aforesaid) for the glory of God, and the good of his people and Nation in general. I can thus in brief unbosome my self in the presence of the searcher of all hearts, unto you, that during the time of our sitting together, we have had no other design but that our Lord Jesus might reign, and *Sion* prosper, and this poor Nation flourish in peace and righteousness, although we were laid in the dust before it.

One thing more I would intimate unto you, That the difference in the House never appeared, so effectual as it did after some upright hearts in the sense of their weakness and want of Gods presence, assembled several days to seek the Lord by Fasting and Prayer, and after appeared in the House with Bibles in their hands, God bearing them witness, (as I suppose) in the consciences of those that were otherwise minded, who not being able to withstand the power and Spirit by which they spake, endeavoured thus to dissolve the House. I shal adde no more, but recommend to your reading the 66th of *Esaiah*, the 5th Verse, and onwards.

Hear the Word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his word: your Brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my Names sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified: but he shall appeare to your joy, and they shall be ashamed, &c.

A Postscript.

AMong many other circumstances which I might have inserted, these two following are worthy of observation.

1. That out of the mouths of several of our Friends, who dissented from us, it hath been several times acknowledged, That that Party that did not resign, did increase and grow daily; and though they were as they supposed the greater Party, and of greater Parts; yet the other Party spake with that demonstration from God and his Word, that they could not withstand them; and many (after the Six days Debate) that were before zealous for Tythes, were convinced by the Lord, and now stand as firm against it.

2. Though some of our dear friends who went along with us in this blessed Vate, were surprised and by sudden violent Temptation (like Peter in the High Priests Balace) moved to subscribe the Resignation, yet since they are very sensible of their so doing, wishing earnestly that they had never done it.

FINIS.